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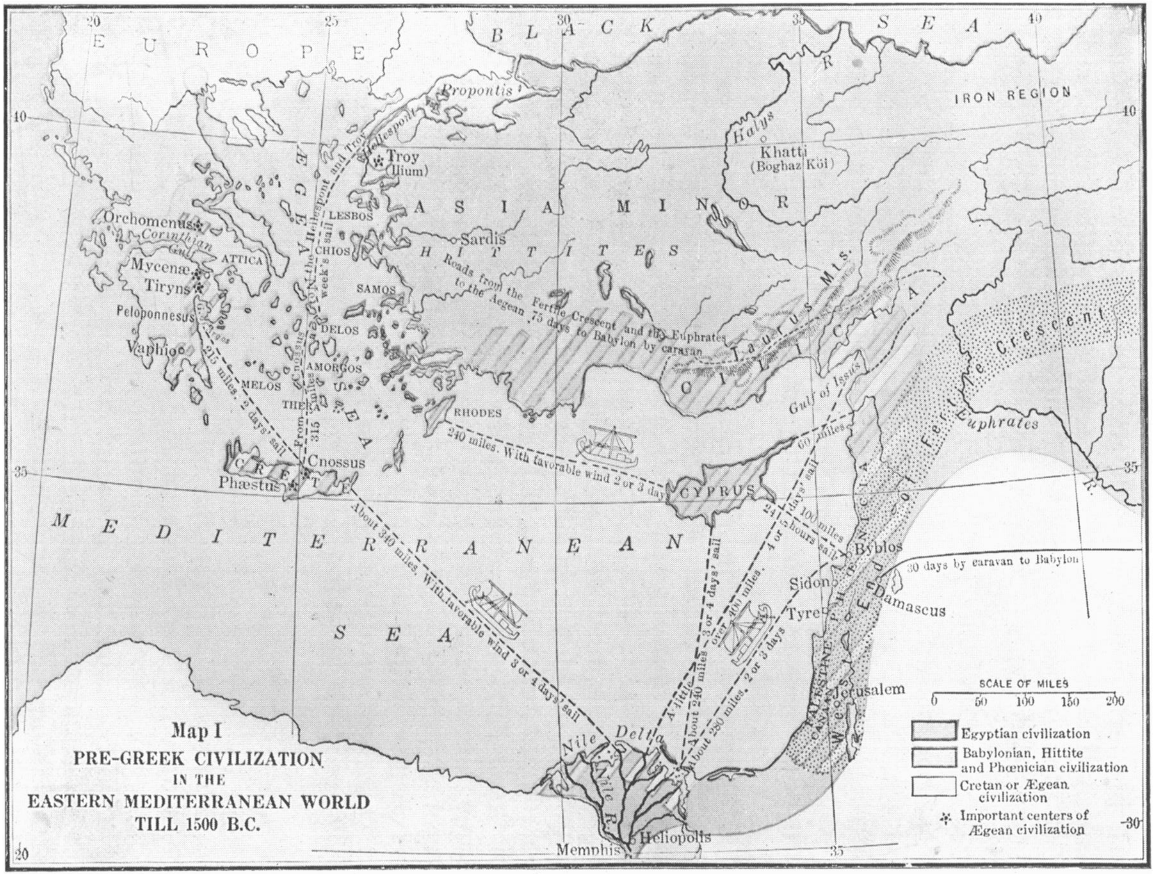

FIG. 85. MAP OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, SHOWING ESPECIALLY THE RELATIONS OF EGYPT AND THE ÆGEAN. (From the author's "Ancient Times," by permission of Ginn & Co.)

THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION[1]

By Professor JAMES HENRY BREASTED
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LECTURE TWO

THE EARLIEST CIVILIZATION AND ITS TRANSITION TO EUROPE, II

Just as the Central American culture, particularly in Yucatan, was in close contact with Cuba in pre-Columbian times, so the shipping of the Pharaohs in the Pyramid Age maintained frequent intercourse with Crete. The map (Fig. 85) shows us how Crete, the southeastern island outpost of Europe, is thrust far out into the Mediterranean toward Egypt, almost opposite the mouths of the Nile. This intercourse was facilitated by favoring winds and currents making the three hundred and forty mile interval a matter of a few days' sail. Thus the products of the Nile craftsmen began to find their way into Crete after 3000 B.C.

It can be no accident that the appearance of metal in Crete and on the neighboring mainland of Asia coincides in date with the appearance of the first sea-going ships built by the Pharaohs. The peculiar copper dagger of Egypt, ornamented with lines diverging from a central rib, passed across Europe and

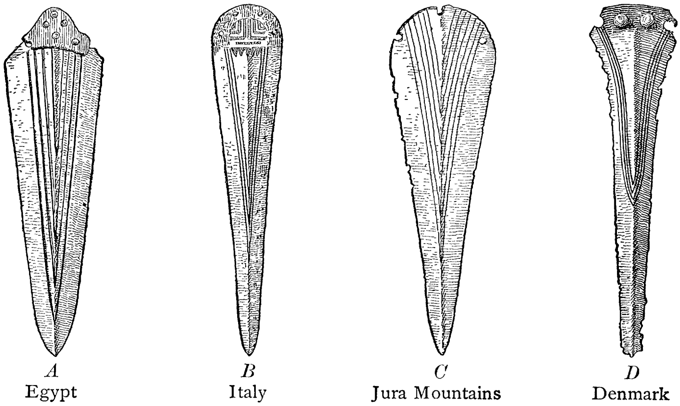

FIG. 86. COPPER DAGGERS OF EGYPT AND EARLY EUROPE, SHOWING THE TRANSITION OF METAL FROM THE NILE VALLEY TO EUROPE. (From the author's "Ancient Times," by permission of Ginn & Co.)

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[1] Delivered before the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D. C., April 28 and 29, 1910, as the seventh series of lectures on the William Ellery Hale Foundation.

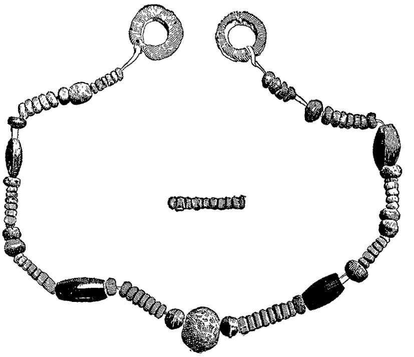


Fig. 87. Egyptian glazed Beads found in an Early Bronze Age Burial in England. (After Sayce in *Journal of Egyptian Archæology,* Vol. I.)

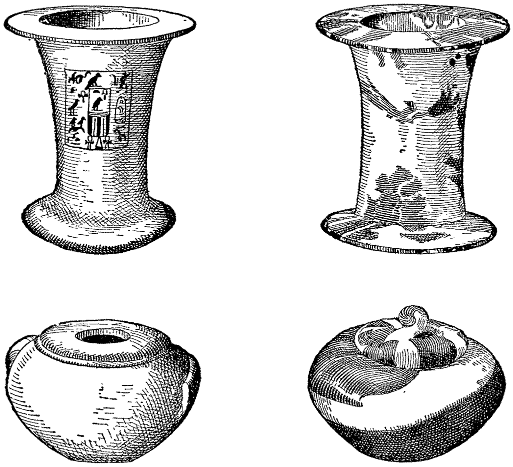
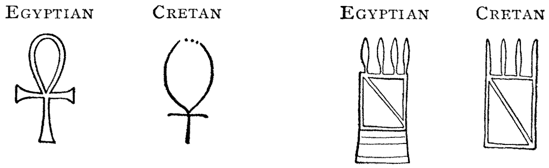
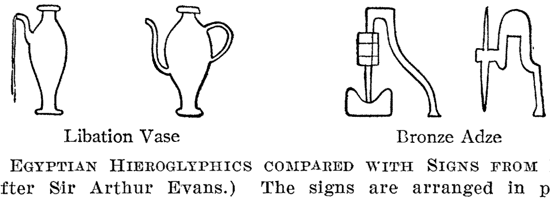


Fig. 88. Stone Vases of Egypt (left) and of Crete (right) in the Pyramid Age, showing how the Early Cretans reproduced Egyptian Forms. (From the author's "Ancient Times," by permission of Ginn & Co.)



Sign of Life

Palace Tower



Libation Vase

Bronze Adze

Fig. 89. Egyptian Hieroglyphics compared with Signs from Early Cretan Writing. (After Sir Arthur Evans.) The signs are arranged in pairs with the Egyptian sign on the left and the corresponding Cretan sign on the right.

penetrated as far north as the Scandinavian countries (Fig. 86), and Egyptian glazed beads have been found as far westward as the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age graves of the British Isles (Fig. 87). The beautiful stone vases wrought by the skilled craftsmen of the Pyramid Age with their new tubular drill (Figs. 73–74), roused the emulation of the gifted Cretans, and they presently succeeded in making very clever copies (Fig. 88). As a result of such endeavors thriving industrial communities, exhibiting surprising native capabilities and artistic gifts, arose in Crete, and their copying, quite freed from any slavish imitation, began to display a vigorous and creative individuality which brought forth the earliest civilization on the southeastern fringes of Europe.

This new Cretan civilization, revealed to us especially by the brilliant discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans at Cnossus, and also by very creditable American excavations, continued to develop after 2000 B.C. in close contact with the Oriental life on the Nile. As the Cretans developed their own writing, the connection with Egyptian hieroglyphic is evident, as Sir Arthur Evans has showed (Fig. 89). After the expansion of Egyptian power into Asia and the Mediterranean in the Feudal Age (or Middle Kingdom, flourishing for two centuries after 2000 B.C.)

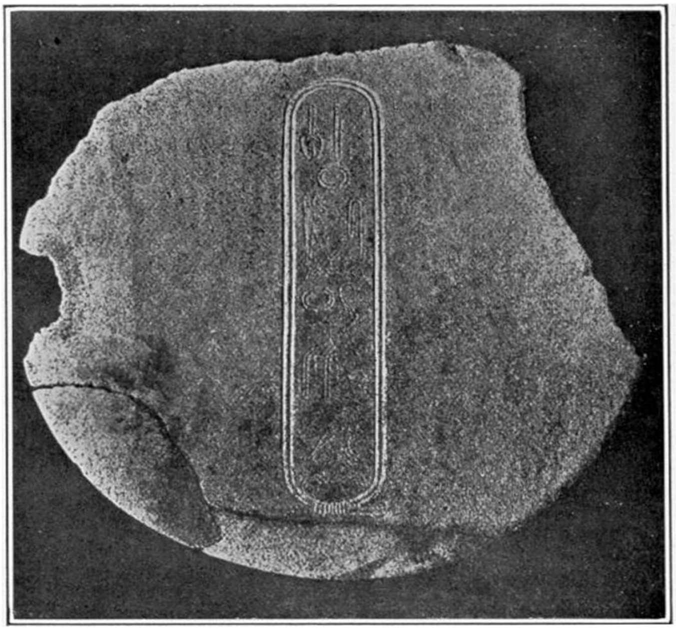


FIG. 90. ALABASTER VASE LID BEARING THE NAME OF THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH KHIAN FOUND BY SIR ARTHUR EVANS UNDER A WALL OF THE CRETAN PALACE OF CNOSSUS—PROBABLY ABOUT THE 17TH CENTURY B.C.

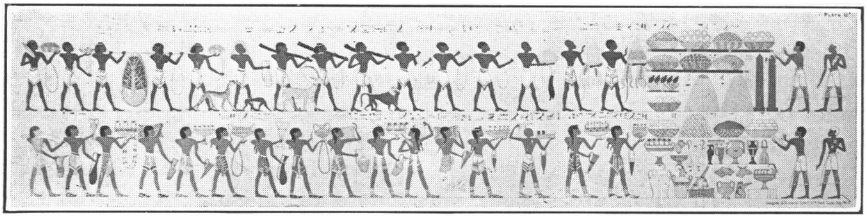


FIG. 91. A LINE OF CRETAN ENVOYS (THE LOWER ROW) IN EGYPT BRINGING TRIBUTE TO THE PHARAOH IN THE 15TH CENTURY B.C. The scene is taken from a painting on the wall of the tomb of Rekhmire, Grand Vizier of the Pharaoh Thutmose III., the greatest of the Egyptian conquerors.

and the Empire (1580–1150 B.C.), the development of the first great navy enabled Egypt to maintain unchallenged supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean and among the islands of southeastern Europe. The beginnings of this Mediterranean power of Egypt are suggested by the name of the Pharaoh Khian, engraved on an alabaster vase lid found under a palace wall at Cnossus (Fig. 90).

As the Egyptian Empire established its power in the northern Mediterranean, the Pharaoh appointed a governor over the Ægean Islands. Cretan envoys bringing their tribute to the court of the Pharaoh were a common sight in the fifteenth century B.C. (Fig. 91). Such Cretans who had visited the Nile,

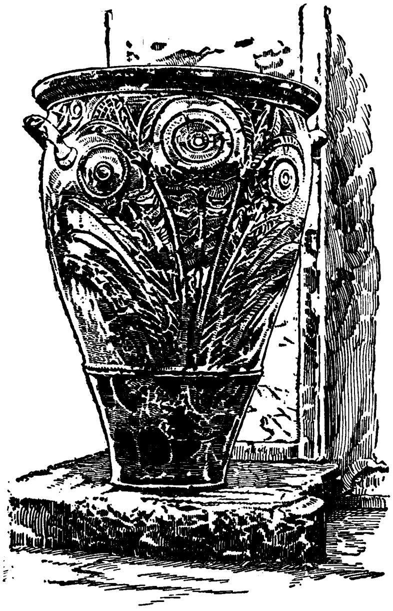


FIG. 92. A CRETAN VASE DECORATED IN RAISED PATTERNS WITH EGYPTIAN FLOWERS. A fine example of the remarkable decorative art of Crete in the Grand Age about the middle of the 15th Century B.C.

and likewise Egyptian wares common in the Cretan markets, brought many a Nilotic motive into the art and life of this remarkable island people which they promptly appropriated. Thus Egyptian flowers like the lotus or the papyrus became common in Cretan art, where they were employed with new life, freedom and vigor, which are a marvellous expression of Cretan ability in decorative art (Fig. 92). This magnificent decorative art of Crete also had its influence on Egypt in return, for the situation was one in which reciprocal influences were inevitable. It is sometimes a question among archeologists as to which was the giver and which the receiver (Fig. 93).

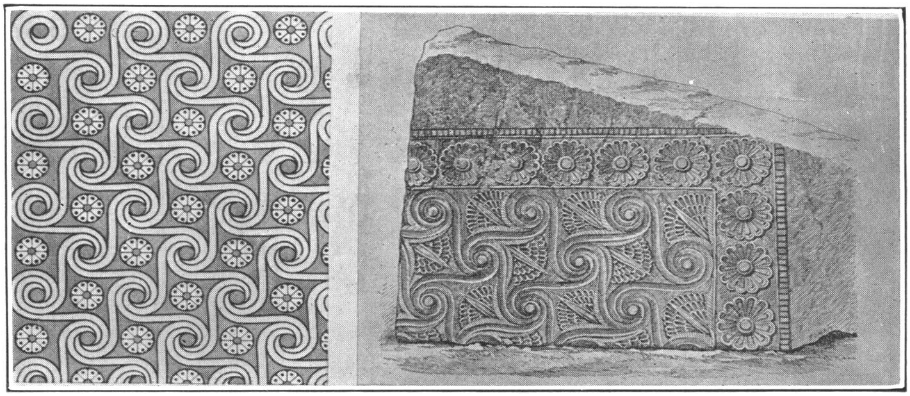


FIG. 93. CEILING DECORATIONS OF EGYPT AND MYCENÆAN EUROPE. The Egyptian pattern (on the left) is from a painted ceiling in an Egyptian tomb at Thebes (Egypt), while the Mycenæan design was carved on a tomb ceiling at Orchomenos in Greece, and belongs to the outgoing Ægean art of the period when the Greeks were already taking possession of the Ægean world—the period which was called Mycenæan after Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenæ.

While the highly developed arts and crafts of Egypt furnished the Ægean world with the devices and the technical processes for carrying on a flourishing industrial life, the architecture of the Nile did not leave a noticeable mark on the fringes of Europe until the Greek Age which we are now approaching. The limited power and resources of the Cretan state or states would not have permitted any Cretan ruler to vie with the vast monumental architecture of the Nile. The gigantic clerestory hall of the Karnak temple (Fig. 94) was a structure possible only to a ruler of imperial wealth and resources, commanding a highly efficient body of architectural engineers such as existed at this time nowhere outside of Egypt. It is impossible in this brief presentation to do more than suggest in terms of such architecture as this, the imperial development which went on in Egypt after the sixteenth cen-

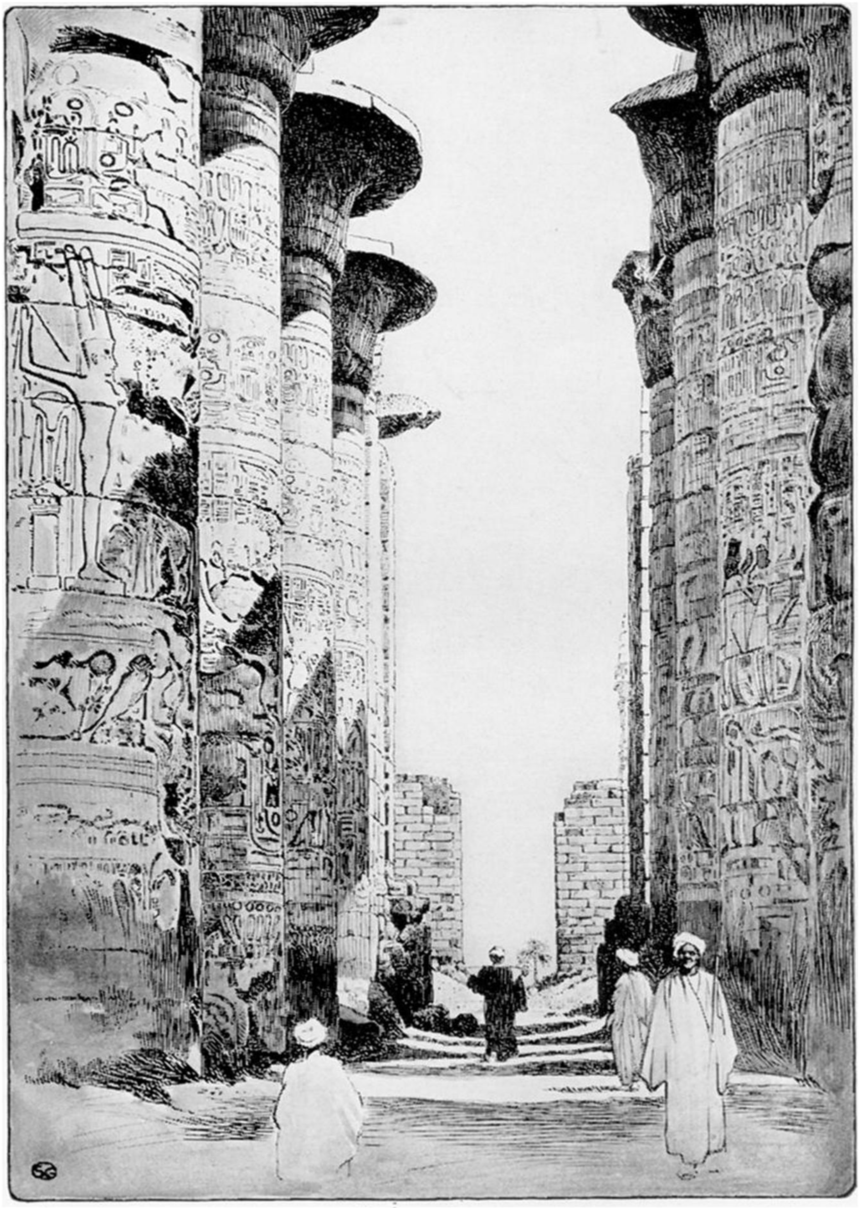


FIG. 94. COLUMNS OF THE GREAT KARNAK CLERESTORY HALL. A hundred men can stand on the capital of each column of the nave.

tury B.C. (Figs. 95–96). The resources and impulses which had prompted this great expansion of Egyptian life and power were exhausted by 1200 B.C. and fifty years later Egypt was nationally prostrate and powerless.

A similar development of human life had meantime been going on in Western Asia, and if we have been late in reaching it, this has been chiefly due to the fact that the Babylonian world of the lower Tigris and Euphrates lay separated from the Mediterranean by a great northern extension of the Arabian desert over five hundred miles across. Babylonian civilization, thus cut off from immediate contact with the Mediterranean world and Europe, was later in affecting the tide of Oriental influences which for ages pressed upon the life of Europe and the West, and in Hebrew and Christian religion has not yet ceased to do so. Another reason which has delayed us in taking up Western Asia is found in the fact that the *prehistoric* development of the region, as we have already stated, has yet to be investigated, and as a whole to be recovered from the still inaccessible and undiscovered sources. But Babylonian influence was not less great and important because it was somewhat later than that of the Nile.

A glance at the map shows us that southern Babylonia and northern Egypt are practically in the same latitude. Yet their respective situations are totally different. Egypt, strategically considered, is surprisingly protected from invasions and assaults of foreign peoples. Its isolated situation due to the wastes of the great Sahara on each side and the Mediterranean on the north, enabled it to enjoy a continuous development uninterrupted by foreign intrusion for many centuries at a time. In an age when maritime peoples were still unknown on the Mediterranean, this body of water was a protecting barrier against the Stone Age barbarians of the north, of enormous importance to Egypt, and to this freedom from invasion at the hands of the backward northern peoples, we

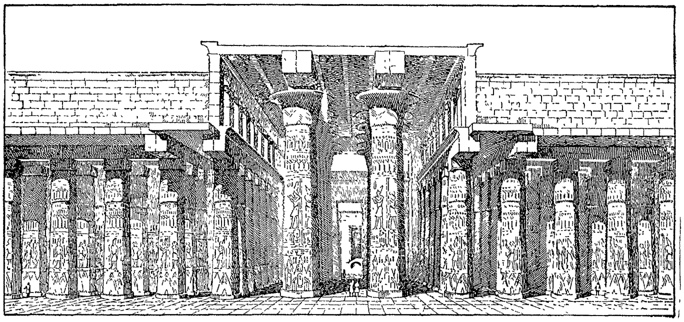


FIG. 95. RESTORATION OF THE GREAT KARNAK CLERESTORY HALL. Built chiefly by Ramses II. in the 13th century B.C., some 1,500 years after the incipient clerestory of Khafre at Gizeh (Fig. 79), it represents the culmination of a long development which has brought forth tall and stately clerestory windows in place of primitive light-chutes, and imposing colonnades in place of rectangular piers (Fig. 80). From such Egyptian temple halls the basilica structures of Hellenistic and Christian Europe have descended.

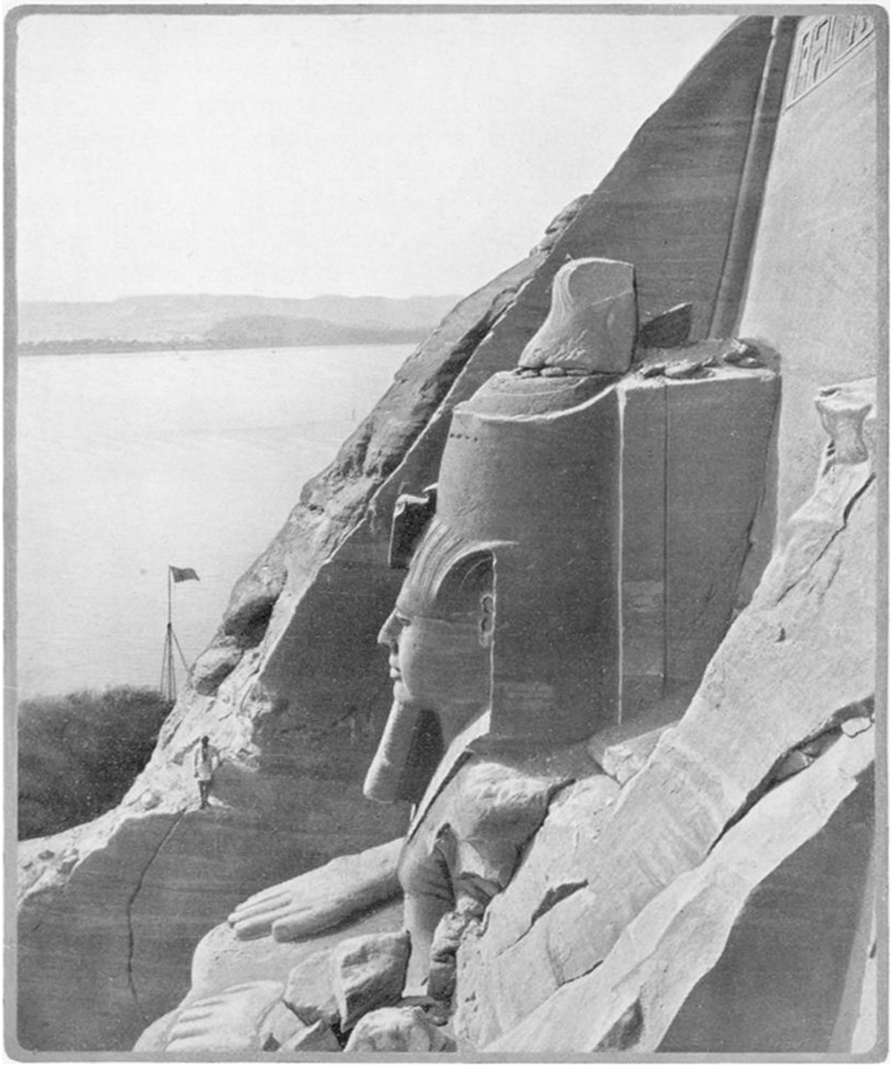


FIG. 96. ONE OF THE COLOSSAL PORTRAIT STATUES OF RAMSES II. ADORNING THE FRONT OF THE CLIFF TEMPLE OF ABU-SIMBEL ON THE NILE IN NUBIA. There are four such figures along the front of the temple; each is seventy-five feet high.

may attribute in no small degree Egypt's advance to civilization at a time when no such great civilized nation had appeared anywhere else.

The alluvial plain on the lower Tigris and Euphrates, which we call Babylonia, was, on the other hand, continually exposed to invasion by the less developed peoples of the mountains on the north and east. At the same time the nomad population, which still finds pasturage for its flocks along the northern fringes of the Arabian desert, beset Babylonia with a similar unceasing menace from the other side. The history of western Asia is often made up of the struggle between the mountaineers on the north and the desert nomads on the south, for the possession of the Fertile Crescent which lay between, and of which Babylonia forms the eastern and Palestine the western end. It was therefore impossible for any people occupying the Babylonian Plain to develop without interference in accordance with its own capabilities and native gifts. The civilized development here was repeatedly halted and sometimes stagnated, as it has done in modern times, for centuries. This was not seldom due to the further fact that the *invasions* were often at the same time *migrations* bringing in a relatively large body of foreign population.

Retarded from prehistoric times by the rigor of the northern winters and the cold of the outgoing glacial age, western Asia was far behind Egypt at the opening of the fourth millennium

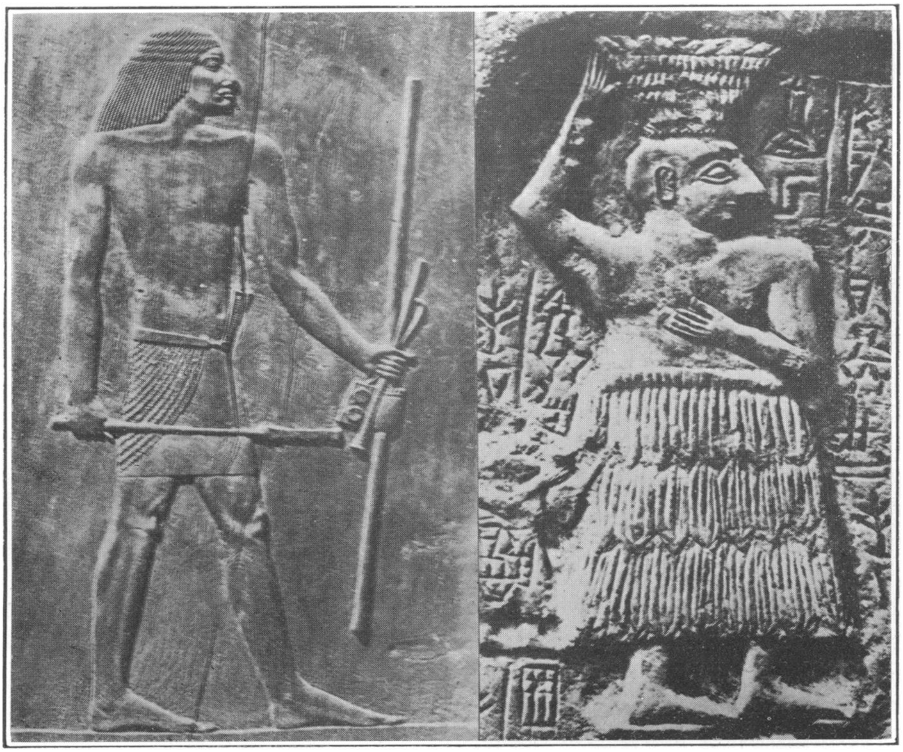


FIG. 97. EGYPTIAN RELIEF (LEFT) OF THE 30TH CENTURY B.C., SHOWING THE STANDING FIGURE OF AN EGYPTIAN NOBLE, AND EARLY SUMERIAN RELIEF (RIGHT), SHOWING THE FIGURE OF A SUMERIAN CITY KING OF THE SAME AGE. We have here an opportunity to compare the art of the two cultures at the same age. It may be noted that the Babylonian relief is a royal monument while that of Egypt is from the tomb of a noble only.

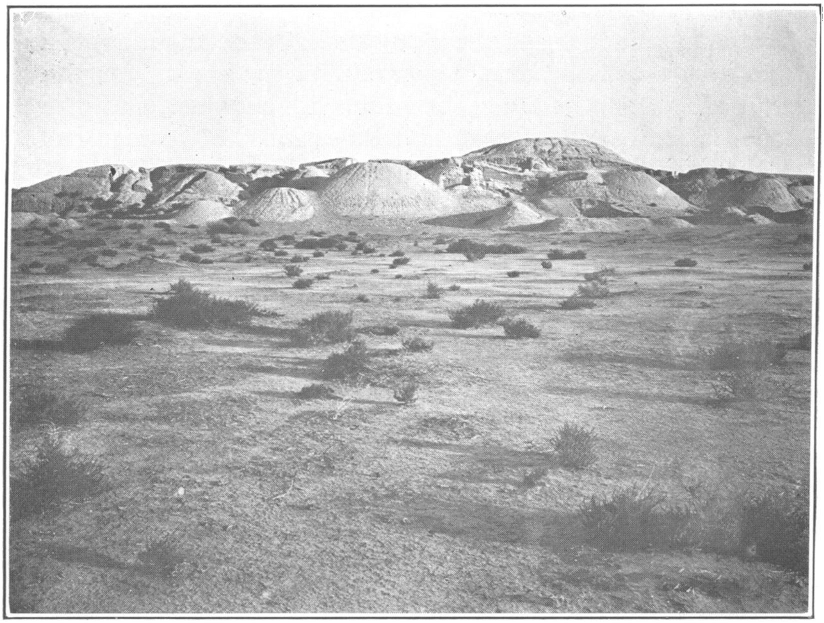


FIG. 98. THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE MOUND OF THE OLD SUMERIAN CITY OF NIPPUR, NOW CALLED NIFFER, IN CENTRAL BABYLONIA. The highest portion of such mounds covers the public buildings and especially the temple mount or tower. (By courtesy of the University Museum, Philadelphia.)

B.C., and the prehistoric advance of Babylonia was for the reasons mentioned above so slow that in the thirtieth century B.C. her culture was still noticeably inferior to that of Egypt (Fig. 97).

The earliest towns on the Babylonian alluvium were rarely more than a few hundred paces across. They were built of sun-dried brick and as a result of the action of weather and successive destructions at the hands of hostile invaders, a considerable volume of disintegrated brick accumulated as the centuries passed. This rubbish was not cleared away when the new buildings were put up, and hence the town finally stood on a high mound (Fig. 98). Such a mound is called by the Arabs a "tell," a word which therefore appears very commonly in the geographical names of Egypt and western Asia. Traversing the Babylonian plain to-day the modern traveler is rarely out of sight of such a mound somewhere on the horizon. These are the treasuries whence the evidence for the reconstruction of early Babylonian life and history is chiefly drawn. Thus far only a small proportion of the early Babylonian mounds has been excavated and thoroughly investigated. Indeed the rigorous methods of Mediterranean archeology have only recently and in limited measure, begun to be applied to Babylonian research.

Each one of these mounds represents an early city-kingdom consisting of the town and a fringe of outlying fields. You could have walked across the whole kingdom in an hour or two. At the head of this petty realm was a king, whose monuments, excavated from the mound now covering his town, sometimes reveal him to us in primitive sculpture engaged in the ceremonious functions of his little state (Fig. 99).

The people over whom he ruled are called Sumerians in the documents of the time. While their racial origin is still uncertain, it is evident that they were not Semites, like the nomads of the neighboring desert, and their affinities are therefore to be sought in the mountains. Well back in the fourth millennium B.C. they had developed their own writing. Like the writing

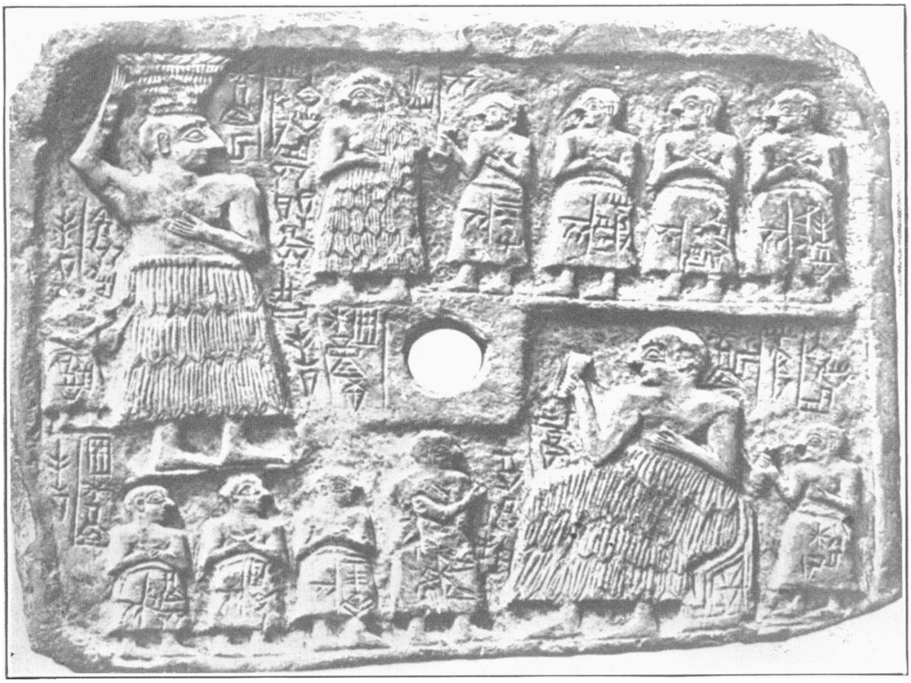


FIG. 99. AN EARLY SUMERIAN CITY KING OF THE 30TH CENTURY B.C. ENGAGED IN PUBLIC CEREMONIES. The relief is engraved on the limestone base of some ceremonial object, presumably a mace, the handle of which was thrust into the hole in the middle of the block. In the upper relief the king is seen standing at the left with a basket probably filled with earth on his head. Before him in a line his children approach, and behind him is his cup-bearer. The ceremony is probably that of beginning the digging for some important public work like a canal or the foundation of a temple. Below the king is seated at the right with much the same personages about him. The birdlike features and crude drawing evince the primitive and undeveloped character of the art. The inscriptions in cuneiform record the names of the individuals shown. That of the king was Urnina, a ruler of Lagash.

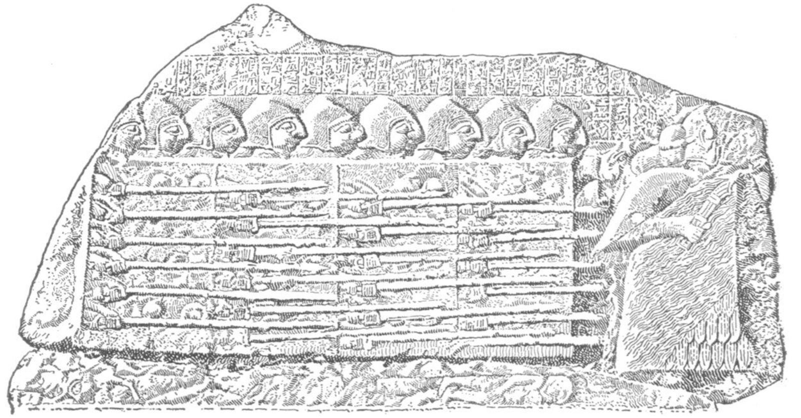


FIG. 100. A SUMERIAN PHALANX. This relief of the 29th century B.C. is a fragment of a round-topped stela commonly called the Vulture Stela, recording the victories of Eannatum, king of Lagash. The scene shows him at the head of a phalanx of the troops of his little city-kingdom.

of Egypt it grew up out of picture signs. As a result of the process of writing on soft clay tablets, the individual lines of the pictures assumed the forms of wedges, and for this reason the writing of these people has been called *cuneiform* (Latin *cuneus,* "wedge"). It never developed alphabetic signs. The Egypto-Babylonian culture group thus devised two physical processes of writing: the one by tracing the characters with a pen and a dark pigment on a vegetable membrane; the other by impressing or incising the characters on a soft or plastic substance. The latter process, that of Asia, survived for a time in

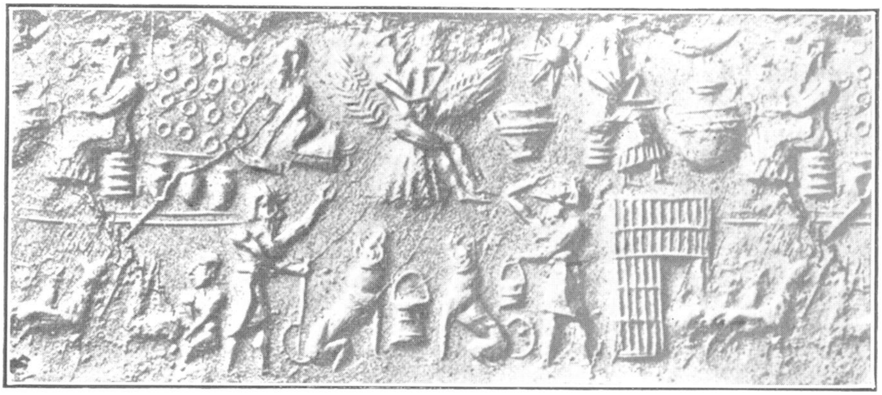


FIG. 101. EARLY SUMERIAN CYLINDER SEAL IMPRESSION SHOWING THE FIGURES OF ANIMALS IN BALANCED OR ANTITHETIC ARRANGEMENT. It must be remembered that these tiny figures were cut by the lapidary around a cylinder of hard stone not thicker than one's finger, and sometimes much smaller, and perhaps only half as long. They represent a great and noble art in striking contrast with the feebleness of the sculptor in relief (Fig. 99).

the clay tablets of Crete and the waxen tablets of the Roman gentleman, and then perished; the other, the method of Egypt, still survives in the pen, ink and paper of modern usage.

These Sumerian city-kingdoms had already gained agriculture and were practising it in the fourth millennium B.C. Their oldest documents mention emmer, wheat and barley as everyday matters. The occurrence of wild wheat, or emmer, which was the ancestor of domesticated wheat, growing in a wild state in western Asia as far east as the Kermanshah Pass, may yet lead to the conclusion that it was domesticated in Babylonia, but we must make the botanical exploration of the Near East more nearly complete before this question can be finally settled. That wheat and barley were domesticated by the Egypto-Babylonian group and passed thence into Europe is, however, perfectly clear.

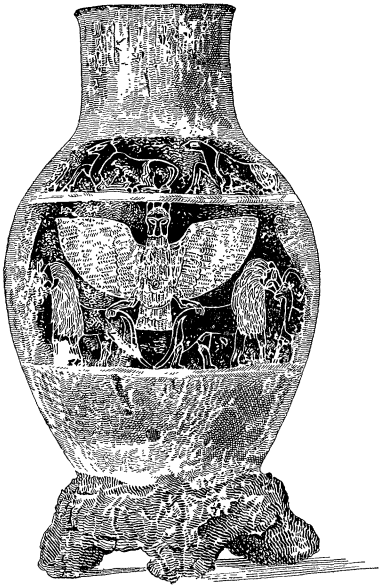


FIG. 102. AN EAGLE SURMOUNTING TWO ANTITHETICALLY PLACED LIONS FORMING THE ARMS OF THE CITY OF LAGASH. Engraved on a silver vase of king Entemena of Lagash in the 29th century B.C. It forms a fine example of early Babylonian heraldic art.

Cattle and sheep were likewise possessed by these people long before 3000 B.C. Further investigation of the culture levels of the fourth millennium, still almost untouched, will be necessary before we can reach final conclusions regarding the sources of these animals. It is interesting to observe that the Sumerians already possessed the wheel as a burden-bearing device, so that they were able to build wheeled carts. It is pos-

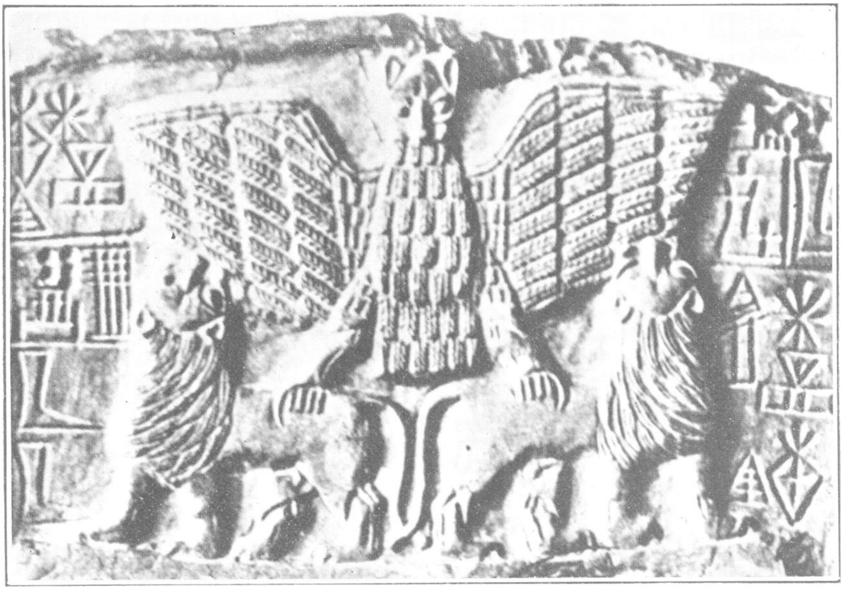


FIG. 103. THE ARMS OF LAGASH AS SHOWN IN FIG. 102, FROM A PLAQUE OF BITUMINOUS CLAY.

sible that they already employed the ass to draw such carts. In any case they possessed the animal in a domesticated state, a fact which points toward connection with Egypt. At the same time they came into possession of copper. The earliest dated pieces of copper in Asia are a thousand years later than the copper needles of the earliest graves in Egypt, and it is evident where we must look for the original home of metallurgy.

These early Sumerian city states were constantly embroiled in petty wars among themselves. The art of warfare among them had reached an extraordinarily high development, far superior to that of Egypt. It is a justifiable generalization to say that the arts of peace were developed chiefly in Egypt, while those of war were due to the peoples of western Asia, especially the Sumerians and Assyrians. We find the Sumerians already employing the phalanx as early as the twenty-ninth century B.C. (Fig. 100). The Egyptian monuments show that this formation had reached the Mediterranean by the twelfth century B.C., and there can be no doubt that the later Greek phalanx was inherited from the ancient Sumerians. It may be a fair question whether the existence of this formation among the Sumerians at such an early date does not point to a western origin for them somewhere in Asia Minor, whence their military experience was easily communicated to Europe.

While early Sumerian art as exhibited in sculpture was at first crude and backward (Fig. 99), the Sumerians developed a decorative art of epoch-making importance. It was practised with the greatest success by the lapidaries, who were called upon to produce the stone cylinder seals employed by the Sumerians to seal their clay documents. The content of this decorative art was chiefly animal and human figures arrayed in a balanced or antithetic arrangement (Fig. 101), which we have already seen in the prehistoric art of Egypt (Fig. 63). As employed by the Sumerians these groups were given startling vigor and power by depicting the figures in violent motion or engaged in tremendous muscular effort. Thus arose the heraldic art familiar to us all in the "lion and the unicorn." The Sumerians therefore contributed to the decorative art of the world a rich treasury of powerful forms to which it has ever since been indebted.

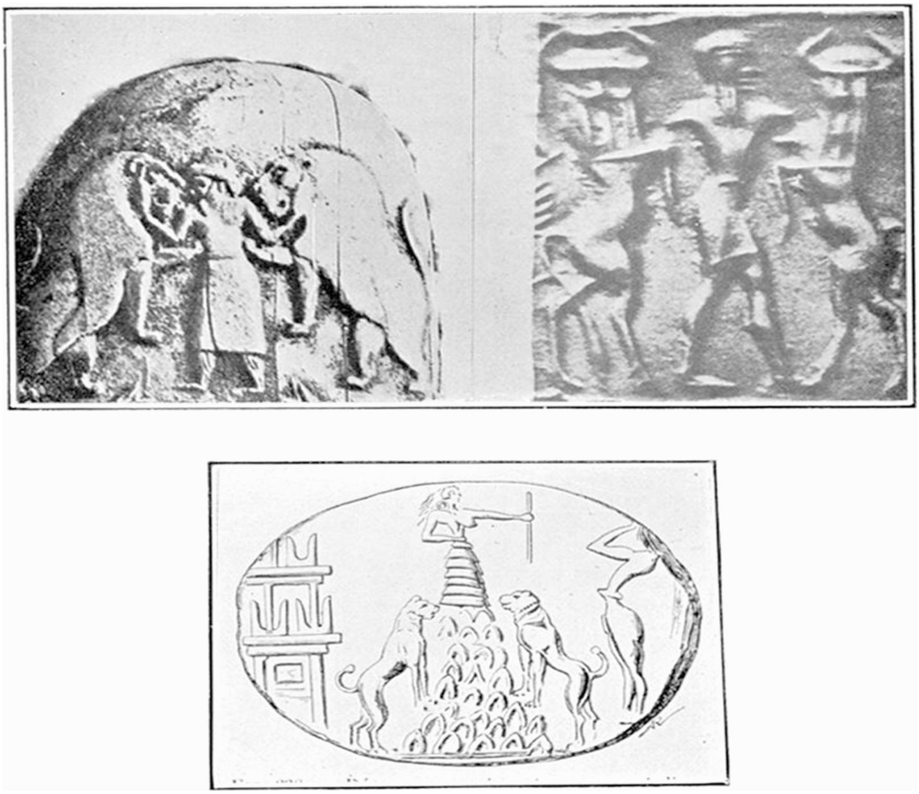


FIG. 104. BALANCED ANIMALS, EGYPTIAN, SUMERIAN AND ÆGEAN. Antithetically placed animal figures were common in the art of Egypt from the remotest times, probably earlier than in Babylonia, as noted in Fig. 63. They are a conclusive evidence of the culture diffusion within the Egypto-Babylonian group, whence such influences passed to the Ægean as shown in the last figure of the three.

Among such figures is that of an eagle with its wings and talons extended in antithetic arrangement. With its talons the bird at the same time clutches the backs of two lions, likewise antithetically placed (Figs. 102 and 103). The lions sometimes turn their heads and set their teeth savagely into the outspread pinions of the eagle. This device formed the emblem of the Sumerian city of Lagash, that is, what we should now call the arms or armorial bearings of the little kingdom. The eagle with outspread wings early passed into Asia Minor (or is this another evidence of the origin of the Sumerians in Asia Minor?), and thence into the Ægean (Fig. 104) and Europe, where we are familiar with it in the arms of the southeast European states, like Austria. It eventually reached the German states, like Bavaria and Prussia, and later also Russia and France. It was from these European sources that we drew our own American eagle, for the earliest ancestry of which we must therefore go back to an ancient Sumerian city-state.

Lack of stone in Babylonia prevented the development of such massive monumental architecture as we have found on the Nile. The Sumerian builder was dependent exclusively upon brick, chiefly sun-dried, but occasionally baked to protect the faces of his larger structures from the destructive action of rain. His buildings were almost all small and unpretentious. He never undertook a treatment of the void, such as developed the piers and colonnades of Egypt. Western Asia was therefore entirely without the column until Greek times, notwithstanding the elaborate colonnades with which Ferguson and other historians of architecture have embellished their restorations of western Asiatic buildings. The Sumerian architect's

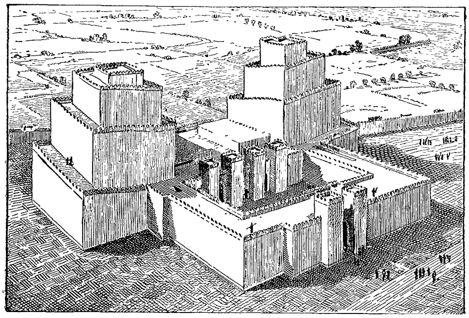


FIG. 105. A PAIR OF EARLY ASSYRIAN TEMPLE TOWERS, ILLUSTRATING THE TEMPLE TOWER OF THE SUMERIANS. (After Andræ.) Such towers were not commonly erected in pairs. These two belonged to the double temple of Anu and Adad in the city of Assur, and as restored by the excavators they serve very well to illustrate the earlier Sumerian temple towers. It was such a structure which gave rise to the tradition of the tower of Babel. From it have descended the prevailing types of tower and spire architecture in Europe (see Fig. 126).

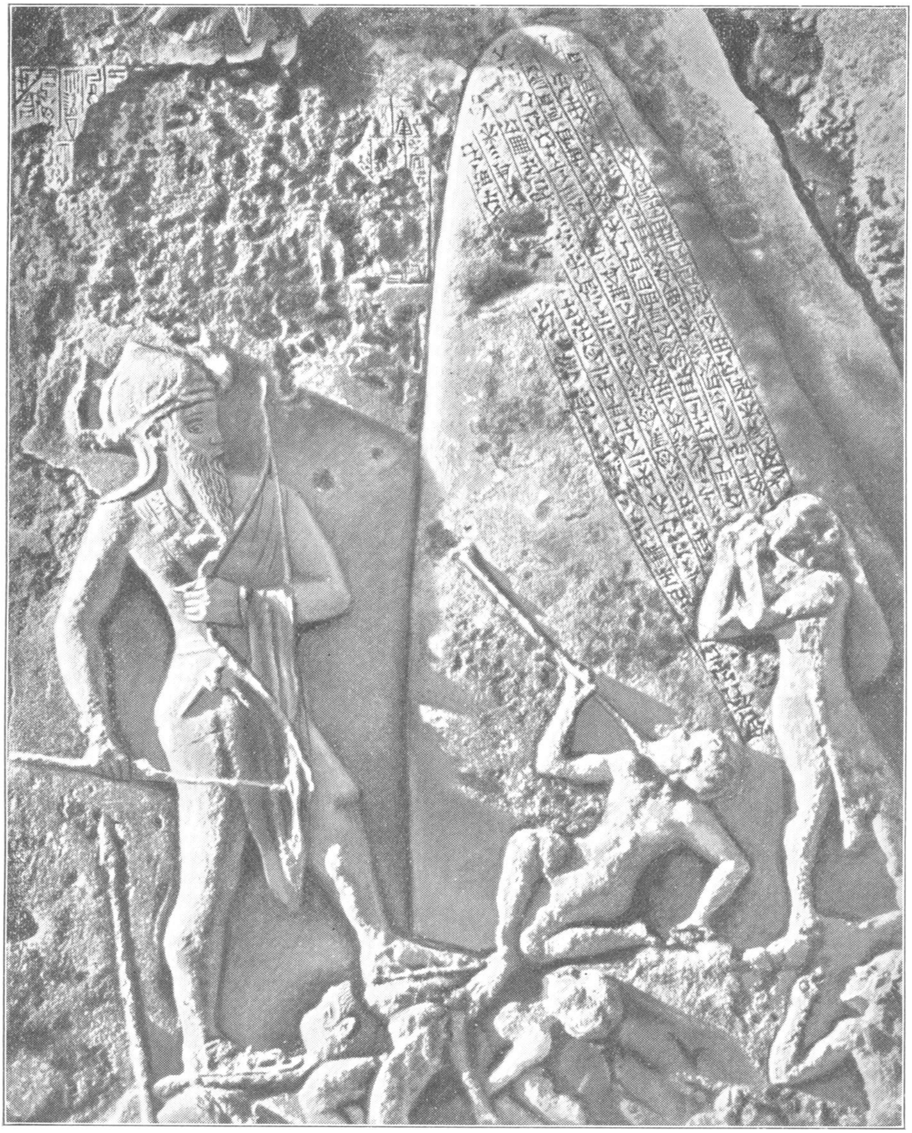


FIG. 106. MONUMENT OF VICTORY OF THE SEMITIC KING NARAMSIN OF AKKAD: THE EARLIEST GREAT SEMITIC WORK OF ART (28th century B.C.). The king, whose figure is depicted in heroic proportions, has pursued the enemy to the summit of a mountain. The artist has selected the dramatic moment when the foe has surrendered and the king indicates his merciful intentions by lowering the point of his weapon.

device for carrying the wall or the roof over the void was the arch and the vault, and he never made wider interiors than he was able to span with his vault. It was from the buildings of western Asia, as we shall see, that the arch was transmitted to Europe.

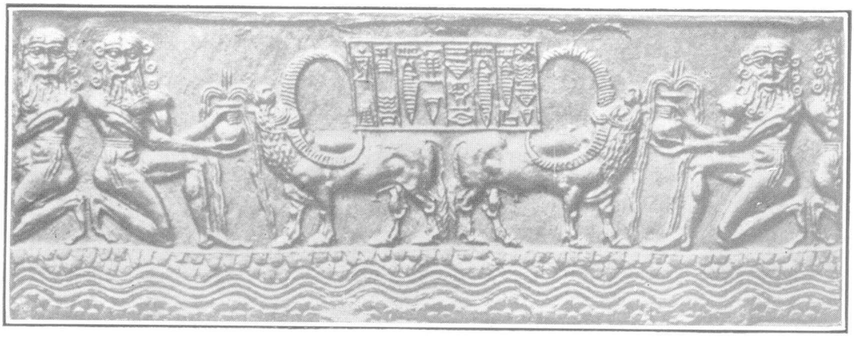


FIG. 107. IMPRESSION FROM A BABYLONIAN CYLINDER SEAL OF AKKADIAN AGE IN THE OLD SUMERIAN MANNER. (Collection de Clercq.)

While the Sumerian made no contribution to the treatment of the *void,* he was the more successful in his handling of the *mass.* He broke up the monotonous surfaces of his brick walls by a rhythmic distribution of alternate panels and pilasters. As to the form of the mass he made a real contribution in the artificial temple mount erected alongside the sanctuary in the form of a rectangular tower with an ascending ramp winding about it from base to summit by which the priest climbed to the top (Fig. 105). This structure, which gave rise to the legend of the Tower of Babel, marked the entrance of the tower into architecture. From it have descended the leading tower forms of the West, as we shall see.

It will be seen that Sumerian civilization made fundamental contributions to the life of man, to which we are still indebted. The exposed situation of their home, however, as we have already stated, made it impossible for them to continue an uninterrupted development. The Semitic nomads who drifted down the Two Rivers, were strong enough to set up a small kingdom in the district of Akkad, the northern portion of the Babylonian Plain. We can trace the career of the Sumerian city-kingdoms from their earliest emergence in the thirty-first century B.C., for about three centuries, and then in the middle of the twenty-eighth century the Semitic rulers of Akkad contributed the first great Semitic leader in history, whom we now call Sargon of Akkad. Although these Akkadian Semites were obliged to make the revolutionary transition from the primitive nomadic life of the desert without writing, arts or institutions, to the civilized life of the Sumerian towns, in short to shift from the tent to the sun-dried brick house, they eventually outstripped their Sumerian teachers, on whom they were at first completely dependent.

Under Sargon they were so completely master of the Sumerian art of war that they gained the leadership of the Babylonian Plain, and the descendants of Sargon continued to rule there for some two hundred years. A noble stela recording the victories of Naramsin, an able ruler of this line, reveals to us the superiority of the Semitic Akkadian in art (Fig. 106). It is the first great Semitic work of art. A comparison with Fig. 99 will demonstrate how far the art of Babylonia had advanced since the early days of the Sumerian city-kingdoms. The Semite displayed his superiority in the same way in the magnificent cylinder seals of the time (Fig. 107). These, like the relief of Naramsin (Fig. 106), belong among the great works of art of all time.

While the Sumerian towns regained the leadership and

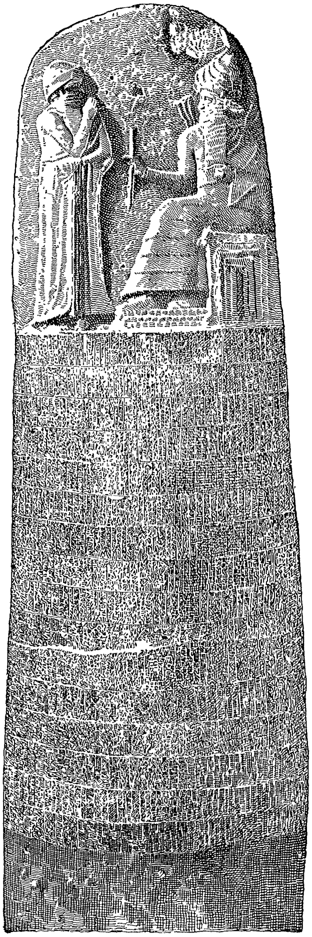


FIG. 108. DIORITE SHAFT BEARING THE GREAT CODE OF HAMMURAPI (early 21st century B.C.). (Compare Fig. 132.)

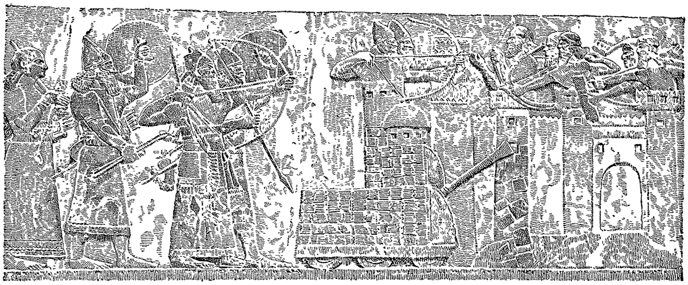


FIG. 109. A SIEGE ENGINE OF THE ASSYRIANS IN THE NINTH CENTURY B.C. A city at the right is being attacked by the Assyrian machine seen in the middle. The machine is on wheels operated by men concealed within. A turret with peep holes protects the commander of the machine, and a firing tower (also with peep holes) is occupied by two archers at the top. A heavy metal-tipped beam (which later passed to Europe as the "battering ram") is swung by concealed men against the walls and the results are seen in the falling fragments of the wall. It will be seen that this is a man-power tank lacking only gunpowder and gasoline power to make it a modern tank. Note the armor on front, over turret and around the firing tower. The scene is from a relief adorning the palace of King Assurnacirpal, and now in the British Museum.

struggled for centuries with waning power, to maintain it, the rise of a new Semitic line, living at the still insignificant town of Babylon, completely crushed the Sumerians and they never after regained the leadership of the region. Like Latin in the medieval church, their language still survived, especially in the literature of religion, and their cultural contributions had long since become a permanent element of western Asiatic civilization. The life of their towns, however, languished and declined, never to rise again. They are marked to-day by a line of mounds along the lower Euphrates, most of which still await excavation.

The powerful Semitic line which had elevated Babylon to the leadership of the plain to which the city gave its name, culminated in the rule of Hammurapi after 2100 B.C. A remarkable monument of this great man's administrative ability has survived to us in the splendid shaft bearing his code of laws in 3,600 lines, the earliest surviving code (Fig. 108). It is a remarkable expression of that ability to organize the material interests of life, especially business and commerce, which as we shall see, later contributed essentially to the rising civilization of Europe.

The reign of Hammurapi, which unified Babylonia and a considerable outlying region round about it, was the culmination of a thousand years of civilized development, from the thirty-first to the twenty-first century B.C. This is the first thousand years of which we can discern the general historical

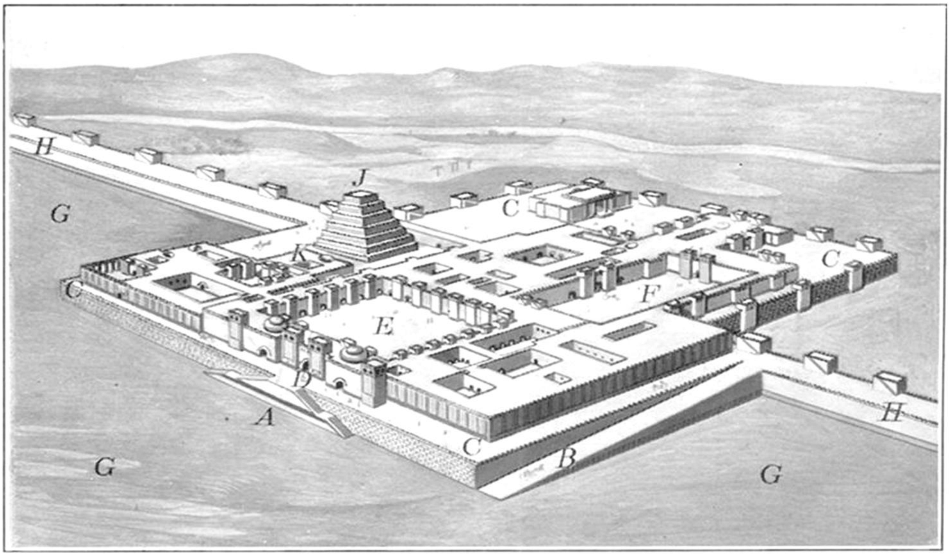


FIG. 110. RESTORATION OF THE GREAT PALACE OF SARGON II. AT KHORSABAD.—Eighth century B.C. (After Place.)

drift in western Asia. Hammurapi's successors were not able to maintain the unity of Babylonia, and the Semite yielded the leadership of the plain for many centuries to non-Semitic mountaineers, a new group of invaders of uncertain race whom we call Kassites. They were little better than barbarians and under them the life of the Babylonian plain relapsed into a stagnation so lethargic that it did not revive for almost a thousand years after Hammurapi's time.

Meantime another Semitic group which had found lodgment and a convenient stronghold on a spur of the eastern

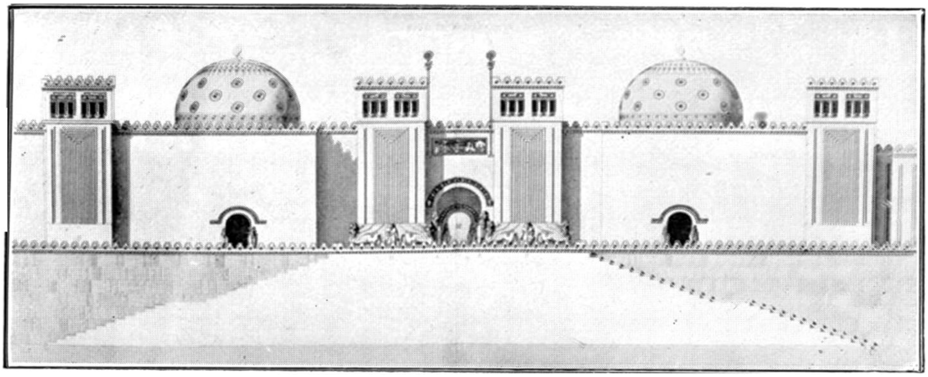


FIG. 111. ARCHED DOORWAYS OF THE FAÇADE OF SARGON II'S PALACE AT KHORSABAD. (Eighth century B.C.) This façade with its three arches was the ancestor of the Roman triumphal arch (Fig. 125), and eventually of the façade of the Christian cathedral with its three arched doorways.

mountains on the upper Tigris, had been developing in obscurity since the days of the early Sumerian city-kingdoms. Its stronghold was known as Assur, from which our familiar designation Assyria has descended. As a result of their exposed situation the Assyrians early produced hardy soldiers; and a nation of peasants and herdsmen, developing on a basis of old Sumerian civilization, with which were combined numerous characteristics of the mountainous north, became the greatest military power, not only of western Asia, but also of the whole ancient world of that age (Fig. 109).

By the middle of the eighth century B.C. the Assyrian kings were ruling a great Western Asiatic Empire, which was advancing its frontiers in almost all directions not limited by the desert. After the fall of the peoples along the eastern Mediterranean coast, including the Hebrews and Phœnicians, in the latter half of the eighth century B.C., the conquests of Sargon II. raised Assyria to a height of power and splendor never before enjoyed by an ancient people. Not far northeast of Nineveh Sargon erected a magnificent palace and city which he called Dur-Sharrukin ("Sargonburg," Fig. 110). It was fitting that this splendid architectural expression of Assyrian power should stand forth as the earliest great monumental architecture of Asia. The old Sumerian buildings, the Syrian palaces, and even the extensive capital city of the Hittites were insignificant compared with it. Its vast staircase, the first great monumental *escalier* in the history of architecture, the spacious arched doorways and enormous sentinel animals of sculptured stone, embellishing the imposing façade (Fig. 111), brilliant with designs in brightly colored glazed brick—all this proclaimed a new imperial age in western Asia. Under Sennacherib and Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus), the walls and splendid palaces of Nineveh stretched for two miles and a half along the banks of the Tigris. National greatness and power, which do so much to quicken the creative imagination of the architect, as we have observed in Egypt, had thus brought forth the first monumental architecture of Asia on a grand scale.

It is a significant fact that the iron mines of northeastern Asia Minor, which had been worked by the Hittites as far back as the thirteenth century B.C., made the Assyrian armies the first great armies of the ancient world to carry weapons of iron. Over against Assyrian ferocity in war, however, even though it was rendered the more dreadful by these terrible weapons, we should in fairness write down not a few other important considerations which essentially alter our estimate of the character and effects of Assyrian supremacy in the ancient world. We can not even summarize these in this slight presentation, but one of them we have suggested in our references to Assyrian architecture, and another which ought not to be overlooked is the presence of a cuneiform library in the palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, the earliest known library in Asia, and centuries older than the oldest royal library among the Greeks.

While the Oriental world, or a large part of it, had been slowly coming under the domination of Assyria, the most fundamental changes had been going on in southeastern Europe as far back as the fifteenth century B.C. The pastures of inner Asia which stretch westward around the north end of the Caspian and along the northern shores of the Black Sea to the mouths of the Danube, have for ages been a great inter-continental sluice-way along which the nomadic peoples of Asia have swept into Europe. Somewhere, along the Asiatic stretches of these grass lands in the third millennium B.C., there lived a group of nomads whom we call Indo-Europeans. Some of their descendants shifted southward along the east side of the Caspian to enter India, as the Sanscrit peoples; while a similar group pushed southwestward to reach the frontiers of Babylonia eventually as the Medes and Persians. Others drifting westward along the north side of the Black Sea finally found their way into the Balkan Peninsula. These were the ancestors of the Greeks. Such at least is the more probable reconstruction growing out of the scanty and difficult evidence now available.

Probably by 2000 B.C. these barbarian nomads, the ancestors of the Greeks, were driving their flocks southward through the passes of the Balkans. Reaching southern Greece by 1500 B.C., they had landed in Crete probably by 1400, and before 1000 B.C. the barbarian Greek tribes had taken possession of the remaining Greek islands and the coasts of Asia Minor, in short of the entire Ægean world. Thus the wonderful Cretan civilization which had grown up in southeastern Europe was overwhelmed and crushed by barbarous invaders who had hardly advanced beyond the Stone Age life of earlier Europe. Such of the unfortunate Cretans as were able to do so took to flight, escaping southward and eastward across the Mediterranean. The Pharaohs of the declining Egyptian Empire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries B.C. were obliged to meet these northern Mediterranean fugitives as enemies, and the temple records of Egypt's wars at this time reveal to us the fleet of Ramses III.

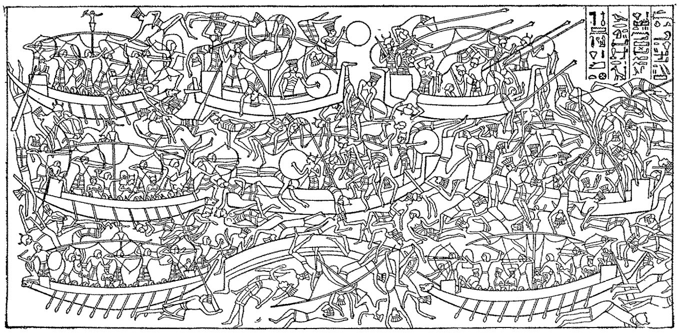


FIG. 112. ÆGEAN FUGITIVE FLEET DRIVEN FROM CRETE BY THE GREEK IMMIGRATION AND FIGHTING AN ENGAGEMENT WITH EGYPTIAN FLEET OF RAMSES III. OFF THE SYRIAN COAST. (Early 12th century B.C.) The scene is sculptured on the wall of a Theban temple of Ramses III. and is the earliest surviving representation of a naval battle. The five Cretan vessels may be distinguished from the Egyptian battleships by the fact that the Cretans have all lost their oars. One Cretan ship is overturned. The high bow and stern of these northern Mediterranean vessels shows that they have been copied from the early Egyptian craft, the first sea-going ships (Fig. 84). The Egyptian fleet kept its distance and won the battle by the use of archery, before which the heavy armed Cretans were helpless. (From a drawing in the author's "Ancient Times," by permission of Ginn & Co.)

crushing a fleet of the fleeing Cretans. It is the earliest naval battle of which we have any representation (Fig. 112). Some of the Cretans found a new home on the shores of Syria and Palestine and we are familiar with one group of them as the Philistines.

Civilization, after having maintained itself for perhaps a thousand years in extreme southeastern Europe, was thus overwhelmed and blotted out by the northern Greek barbarians, who were only prevented by the Mediterranean from extending their invasion southward and destroying the civilization of Egypt. We have here a striking illustration of how the Mediterranean saved Egypt from a destructive invasion such as those to which Babylonia and the Mesopotamian world were continually exposed. Under the shadow of the great civilizations of the Orient, the rude Greek nomads settled down among the wreckage of the Cretan and Mycenæan palaces. Cretan writing, the earliest writing in Europe, disappeared. The drawings on Greek pottery (Fig. 113) of the eighth century B.C. are not as good as those of the Paleolithic hunters in the caves of southern France ten thousand years earlier, and no better than many made by our own American Indians.

During the flourishing days of the Assyrian Empire, which stopped Greek colonization in Asia east of Tarsus, the life of Greece developed slowly under the influences of Oriental civilization. The civilization which thus arose in Europe *for the* *second time* was exposed to the forces of civilized life in the Near East which had so long been converging with ever increasing power on the Greek world. The agencies by which these influences chiefly operated were commercial, and the routes along which they came were in the main through Asia Minor and across the Mediterranean. Through Asia Minor came Babylonian business usages, like credit, and weights and measures; while coinage, which arose in Asia Minor, reached the Greeks in the seventh century B.C.

The decline of Egypt and the destruction of the Cretan fleets left the Mediterranean free to exploitation by the maritime cities of the Phœnicians, which gained great commercial power and wealth, and became the common carriers of the Mediterranean after 1000 B.C. The Phœnicians were clever imitators and their leading cities became the centers of an active industrial life of which the output was a curious composite of Egyptian and Asiatic elements. The latter were in turn a composite of Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian and Hittite, but chiefly Sumero-

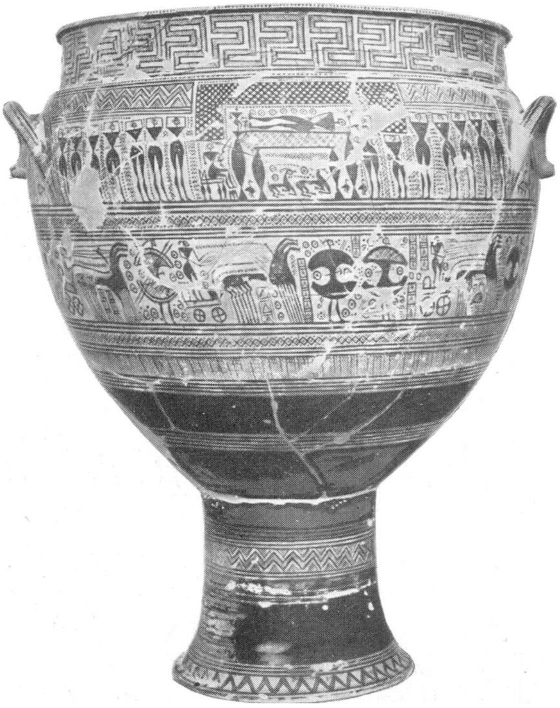


FIG. 113. ARCHAIC GREEK PAINTED POTTERY VASE OF THE DIPYLON TYPE DATING FROM THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C. A comparison of the crude painted decoration on this vase with the wonderful Cretan decorated vases like Fig. 92, will illustrate the collapse of civilization due to the invasion of the cultivated Ægean world by the barbarian Greeks during the latter half of the second millennium B.C. (By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.)

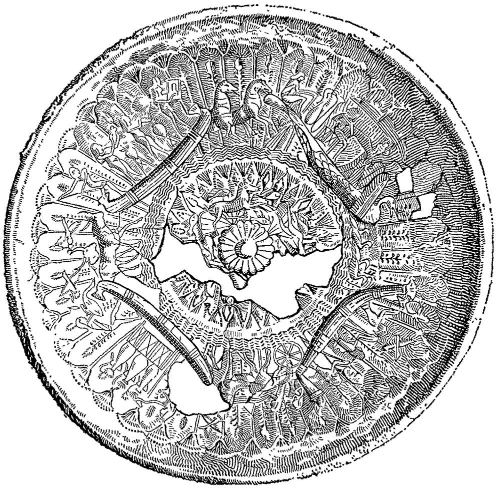


Fig. 114. Silver Platter made by Phœnician Craftsmen and engraved by them with Egyptian Decorative Motives. Now in the Berlin Museum.

Semitic. Their arts and crafts and industrial processes, like the making of glass, the pouring of hollow casts, and the production of diaphanous linens, they learned from the Egyptians; while their decorative art combined the vegetable motives and the sentinel animals of the Nile with the balanced human and animal figures of the Euphrates (Figs. 114–115).

The Phœnicians learned shipbuilding from the Egyptians and copied the models of the Egyptian ships which had been entering their harbors since the thirtieth century B.C. (Fig. 84). This is quite evident from the paintings of early Phœnician ships preserved to us in the Egyptian tombs (Fig. 116), and dating from the fifteenth century B.C. Against the old tend-

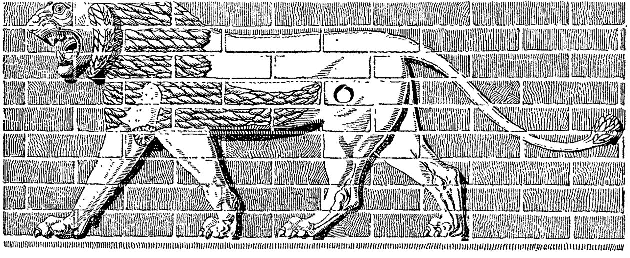


Fig. 115. Ivory Comb made by Phœnician Craftsmen and decorated by them with a Lion drawn from Assyrian Sources. The lion in gorgeously colored glazed brick was one of a line decorating the wall on both sides of a festival avenue of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon. It was drawn by the Babylonian architects from such decorations in the Assyrian palaces (*e.g.,* Fig. 110).

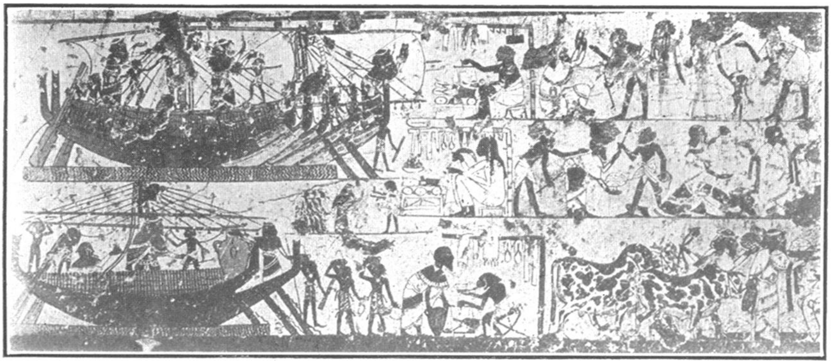


FIG. 116. PHŒNICIAN SHIPS LANDING AT AN EGYPTIAN MARKET PLACE IN THE 15TH CENTURY B.C. (After Daressy.) The model of the Phœnician craft, with high bow and stern, shows that the Phœnicians built them in imitation of the earliest Egyptian sea-going ships (Fig. 84). The Phœnician merchants, clearly marked by their foreign costume, may be seen trafficking in the Egyptian bazaars. It was here that they learned the arts and crafts and the decorative motives which they then so freely introduced in their home ports, and transmitted throughout the Mediterranean, and also as far east as Assyria and Babylonia. The scene is taken from a wall-painting in an Egyptian tomb at Thebes in Upper Egypt.

ency to attribute too great importance to the cultural activities of the Phœnicians in the eastern Mediterranean, there has been a natural reaction; but it has gone much too far, and has overlooked new and important evidence like the painting of the Phœnician ships in Fig. 116. Here the Phœnicians are shown trafficking in the Egyptian bazaars, whence they drew the processes of industrial art, as well as its decorative motives. Similarly, unfinished work in ivory has been found in Assyria, still bearing the Phœnician workman's scribbled notes. As practisers and distributors of borrowed Oriental arts throughout a large area in Western Asia, and very widely in the Mediterranean world, the Phœnicians played an imposing rôle in the early centuries of the last millennium before the Christian Era. Phœnician merchandise like the ivory comb of Fig. 115 was common as far west as the Spanish Peninsula, where such things are found in early burials.